

STATEMENT OF INTENT GUIDANCE – Addressing behaviour of parents, carers and visitors

This statement of intent outlines the steps that will be taken where parents' behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable.

Each school within the local authority is committed and will endeavour to resolve any concerns or complaints raised by parents at the earliest opportunity, in line with their complaints policy and restorative principles. However, this will only be done in a climate of mutual respect.

The school and local authority has a zero-tolerance approach to inappropriate, aggressive and abusive behaviour towards staff, children and community members. The school encourages close links with parents and the community. We believe that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

Most parents, carers and others visiting the school are keen to work with schools and are supportive. Unfortunately, a tiny minority of parents/carers are verbally and/or physically abusive towards school staff, children and or other community members. This is simply unacceptable.

The school and local authority expects its staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement, as appropriate, of other colleagues. However, all staff, children and community members have the right to work, play and use the school without fear of violence or abuse.

The school and local authority expects parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable, polite, and respectful way towards all staff, children and community members, and will not tolerate verbal or physical abuse of any nature under any circumstances. The school and local authority reserves the right to take any necessary actions to ensure that members of the school community are not subjected to such behaviour.

BEHAVIOUR

What is vexatious behaviour?

A **vexatious** contact is an individual who uses unreasonable language, makes threats, is abusive, acts menacingly or uses other forms of harassment when contacting and/or corresponding with staff.

What is habitual behaviour?

A habitual contact is an individual who **persistently** contacts the school, and the school considers that they either raise new issues of low significance or raise the same issue despite appropriate closure (e.g. through the complaints process).

Listed below are examples of behaviour that are considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of unacceptable behaviour.

- Threats of any nature towards staff, children and young people and other parents/carers
- Shouting and/or use of bad language towards staff, children and young people and other parents/carers, either in person or over the telephone.
- Use of insulting or defamatory language on one occasion or persistently.
- Physically intimidating a member of staff e.g. standing very close to them, encroaching on personal space, jabbing, pointing, shaking of fists, etc.
- Physical abuse, threatening, oppressive or aggressive behaviour, including aggressive hand gestures.
- Persistent and threatening aggressive emails/correspondence sent to the school or members of staff.
- Hitting or pushing, e.g. slapping, punching, kicking, or poking.
- Entering the school site under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Smoking/vaping/using drugs whilst on school property.
- Bringing alcohol onto school premises or excessive consumption of alcohol at school events.

- Bringing dogs, except for assistance dogs, on to the school site without the explicit permission of the Headteacher.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Attempting to gain entry to any part of the school in disregard of procedure or without permission.
- Displaying any signs and/or handing out notices or sharing messages which could cause unreasonable upset and/or harm to any member of staff, governor, parent, or child.
- Writing abusive comments about a member of staff in public places including online forums.
- Discriminatory comments such as racist, sexist, or homophobic insults.
- Breaking the school's security procedures.
- Refusal to leave the school site when asked to.
- Threats of any kind including use of personal power or privilege to coerce or control other people.
- Sexually inappropriate comments or actions.
- Illegal behaviour.

ACTIONS:

Where an offence is committed the school should report the incident immediately to the police. In an emergency, school leaders should follow their emergency procedures and call 999.

For all other incidents, the immediate consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be a fixed term ban from the school premises.

The school is not responsible for the organisational arrangements for children during a ban; it is for parents to provide alternative arrangements for bringing children to school.

Further action may include the police being informed of the incident and a request for a harassment order or an injunction to be imposed.

Staff will not respond to rude, abusive and/or threatening phone calls or emails. Where emails or phone calls are received persistently regarding the same issue, staff can take the decision not to reply. It may be useful to establish a single point of contact, for example a complaints inbox or named individual, to enable leaders/specific staff to be shielded from further correspondence. Contact your ICT provider for advice.

If complainants are dissatisfied with the school's approach to their complaint, they have the right to escalate any concerns through the schools' complaints policy, the DFE or Ofsted.

STEPS:

1. The headteacher will make the chair of governors or their vice-chair in their absence aware of the circumstances and discuss action with them. The chair of governors will agree that written confirmation is sent to the parent/carer, from the headteacher and director of education, to inform them that they are banned from the premises/using email to contact the school and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that an injunction may follow. This may include restrictions to other forms of communication, for example, the use of a third party. A copy of the letter must be shared with the chair of governors.
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the police will be included.
3. The director of education for BfC will be informed of the ban and will be provided with a copy of the letter sent to the parent/carer. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.
5. The chair of governors will communicate with the parent/carer at interim points regarding the process for removing the ban and or any circumstances that may have changed which would indicate the ban should be

removed. The chair of governors may seek to have a discussion with the director of education at any point prior to removing the ban.

All efforts should be made by the school to meet with the parent/carer to resolve the issue and return to effective and appropriate communications.

Unfortunately, where parent/carer behaviour is repeatedly unacceptable or illegal, it will not be possible to continue working with them and, as a final resort, legal action may be taken. Schools must report all incidents to the director of education so that repeat incidents can be reviewed with the legal team.

Further guidance is available in the DfE publication, School Security Advice, and can be found on the DfE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

CONCLUSION

Children learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and school. While every effort will be made to work with parents/carers, this will only be possible where parents/carers behave in an acceptable way. The school and local authority will always act where behaviour is unacceptable or illegal, without exception, or where it breaches health and safety legislation.